

Everybody Sang—

Eskimo Songwriter John Angaiak

COLLEGE — Ak'-a ta-maa-ni,
Yu-ut ta-ma-kut Ca-per-narque-
Iruut Tuai...

In days of old
Our people were amazing
The way they led their lives
In those days gone by
So it was that their ways
Would sometimes lead them
into conflict.

Even using bows and arrows
Yai-ai, yai, yai, yai, yai.

The words, both Eskimo and English, are those of John Angaiak, a student songwriter. Local folks and a select group of Californians are getting to know and like his style. Folk rock with a hint of hill...Old Eskimo songs with new polish.

"My parents, everybody sang at home," Angaiak recalls. He can't ever remember learning. All his brothers—eight or nine of them—play the guitar. It sort of came naturally.

He's a Yupik Eskimo from Tununak on Nelson Island. At the moment his life is a little crowded. He's a senior at University of Alaska majoring in sociology and art.

A job with the Bureau of Land Management is paying his way and they like him well enough to take him full time if he ever wants to stay.

"There's a lot of things I want to do," he shrugs. "Be a social worker..."

But it doesn't preclude making music.

Last year Angaiak took on Steve Helbern as his manager, put up his own money and cut a tape at the University of Alaska studio. It went to Los Angeles where it was made into a record. Angaiak illustrated the record jacket himself, and he was in business.

Most likely, you remember hearing him from the Tundra Times Banquet last year. That brought him other engagements.

"One with the Soroptomists... all women," he recounts. "I was nervous. They wanted a song with a message and I guess the mike just made them up."

Now he's recording again, this time on stereo. The Eskimo Language Workshop at the University is helping with the translation of lyrics as they did last year and everyone is highly optimistic about the venture.

Even better than stereo, you can see him in person at the



JOHN ANGAIAK

next Tundra Times Banquet, Oct. 9. Inquire early about a seat, though, because it might just be a sell out.